

Church Disputes Rockefeller, Calls CIA's Misdeeds Major

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By George Lardner Jr.
Washington Post Staff Writer

Sen. Frank Church (D-Idaho) said yesterday there is hard evidence of Central Intelligence Agency involvement in assassination plots and accused "certain members of the Rockefeller commission" of an apparent attempt to play down the CIA's misdeeds as minor transgressions.

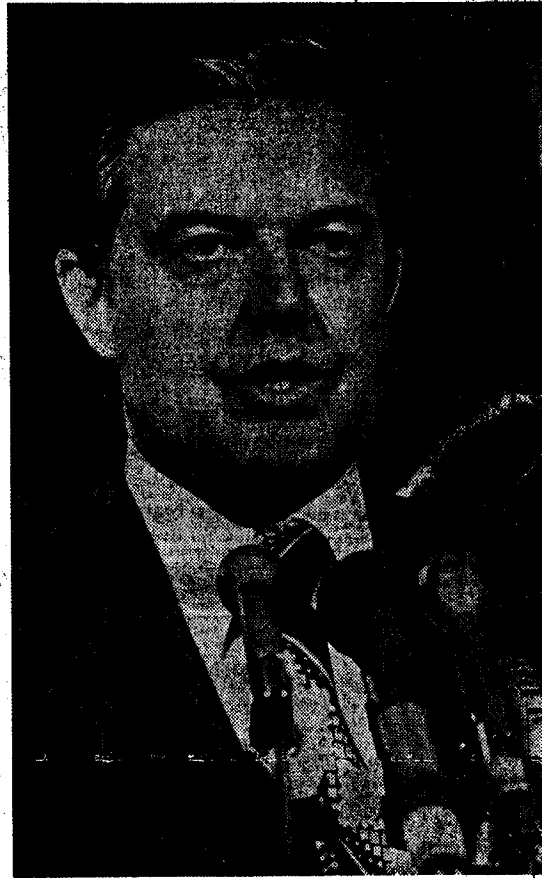
"I don't regard murder plots as a minor matter," Church, who is chairman of the Senate committee on intelligence operations, told reporters. He said he was "thoroughly mystified" by the public statements coming out of the Rockefeller commission in recent days, especially from Vice President Rockefeller himself.

Rockefeller said Monday at a final meeting of his White House-appointed investigating commission that the CIA had broken some laws but that the wrongdoing was "not major" when weighed against the CIA's overall record.

Voicing his sharp disagreement, Church said that his committee has already obtained "hard evidence" of CIA complicity in assassination plots and that the Rockefeller commission had also heard enough of that same evidence to substantiate that charge.

The Idaho Democrat said he regarded the issue as "of such grave importance to the country" that the committee has put all other inquiries aside and intends to pursue it until it can be thrashed out publicly either through open hearings or through a committee report.

Church also disclosed that the committee has already taken sworn testimony from five past and present CIA officials on assassination plots and has scheduled the appear-



By James E. W. Atherton—The Washington Post

Sen. Church talks to press before committee hearing.

ance of at least four others in the coming week, including former CIA Directors John McCone and Richard Helms.

In addition, subpoenas have been issued for Mafia figure John Roselli, who reportedly worked with the CIA in the early 60s on schemes to kill Cuban Premier Fidel Castro,

and for Robert A. Maheu, a former FBI agent and consultant to billionaire Howard Hughes.

According to informed sources, Maheu recruited Roselli to work for the CIA.

Church spoke out at a break-

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fast meeting with reporters and elaborated on his remarks later in the day following another closed committee meeting with CIA Director William E. Colby.

After Church's accusation, Rockefeller told reporters that his Monday remarks had

been "misinterpreted." He said he had been speaking only of the number of the CIA's wrongdoings and not their seriousness.

Church said he had no intention of making any retractions. He said Rockefeller's remarks and an earlier statement by C. Douglas Dillon, the commission's vice chairman, had clearly conveyed the impression that the CIA's missteps were "not of major importance."

"Ours is not a wicked country and we cannot abide a wicked government," Church declared.

With that in mind, he said he felt compelled to protest "the apparent attempt of certain members of the Rockefeller commission to lead the public to believe that any misdeeds of the CIA were minor and that the agency has been relatively without guilt."

Cuba's Castro was evidently the prime target of CIA as-

sassination schemes although the agency reportedly privately voiced concern earlier this year about similar allegations concerning the late Rafael Trujillo of the Dominican Republic and the late Patrice Lumumba of the Congo (now Zaire).

Church said his committee was investigating alleged assassination schemes at all levels, whether the targets might be foreign heads of state or secret agents of rival intelligence services, such as the Soviet Union's KGB.